

FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

HOW TO REPORT HOUSEHOLD CHANGES

Everyone who receives food stamp benefits must report when their income or household situation changes. Most households have to report these changes on a quarterly basis. Other households will report changes on the change reporting basis. Your worker will tell you whether you are a quarterly or change reporting household. If you're not sure how to report changes, what changes to report, or what proof we need, be sure to ask your worker.

The following list describes each type of reporting.

QUARTERLY REPORTING

If your worker tells you that you are a quarterly reporting household, you will need to turn in a completed Quarterly Eligibility Report (QR 7) by the 5th day of each 3rd month of the quarter. Your worker will tell you about your quarters.

When you turn in your QR 7, the information will be used to determine the amount of food stamp benefits you can get for the next quarter. For example:

If you turn in a QR 7 in March, you will report what income you had in February. You will also report any income changes you expect to have in April, May and June. If the income from February will stay the same, your cash aid and/or food stamp benefits for April, May and June will be figured using that same income and expenses for each of those months. If your income and expenses will change, your worker will use the new income amounts you will get in April, May and June to figure your cash aid and/or food stamp amount for those months. This is called prospective budgeting.

Quarterly reporting rules say that you must report things at certain times. You will be assigned a "report month" for each quarter. This will be the second month of each quarter. For example, if your quarter is January, February and March, February would be your "report month" and your report would be due by the 5th day of March. The report is always due by the 5th day of the month following your report month and will be considered late if not received by the 11th day of the month. If your QR 7 is late, you will have to pay back any cash aid or food stamps that you received but was not supposed to get.

You will have to report all income, changes in the number of people in your household, property bought or sold by people in your household and other information for that report month as well as any changes in your income and expenses that you expect to happen in the next quarter.

If you do not turn in a completed Quarterly Eligibility Status Report (QR 7) by the end of the first working day of the month after the month your report is due, your household's benefits will be stopped.

What you must report on a Quarterly Report:

- Earned income from any source;
- Unearned income of any kind;
- Anyone getting free rent or utilities;
- Anyone who has expenses that are paid by someone else;
- Reduced hours of work or training;
- Someone moves in/out of your home;
- If you move;
- Any real or personal property bought, sold or exchanged;
- Any change in court-ordered child support paid by a household member;
- Anyone's citizenship/immigration status changes or receives correspondence from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (formerly INS);
- Anyone reaches 60 years of age;
- Anyone gets a job, training or school payments for expenses;
- Anyone has a job, training or school costs such as for dependent care or supplies;
- Any household member convicted of a drug-related felony after August 22, 1996 for manufacturing, sale, distribution of a controlled substance, or any activity in connection with these unlawful acts, or harvesting, cultivating or processing marijuana, or involving a minor in the above activities, cannot receive food stamp benefits.
- Any household member fleeing from the law or in violation of probation.

REPORTING CHANGES DURING THE QUARTER

You must report the following things within ten (10) days of the changes even if it is not your report month. You are to report:

- If your address changes.
- If you are an Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD); food stamp recipient and the number of hours they work or are in training drop to less than 20 hours a week or 80 hours in a month.

REPORTING VOLUNTARY CHANGES

You may also report other information voluntarily, even when it is not your report month. Reporting information voluntarily may cause your household benefits to go up. The county will take action within ten (10) days after you provide verification. One exception is when the increase results from adding another person to your case. In that situation, the county will take action to increase benefits the first of the month after you provide verification. **Even if you have already reported something to the County, you must also report it on your next QR 7.**

REPORTING VOLUNTARY CHANGES - Continued

Some examples of voluntary reporting that may cause your benefits to go up include:

- Loss of income;
- Member becomes disabled or 60 years old;
- Member begins to pay court-ordered child support;
- New household member in the home;
- Shelter/housing cost increases;
- Medical expenses.

If you receive food stamp benefits and you voluntarily report income that has increased, and it is above the gross income level for your household size, your benefits may be discontinued.

Some examples of voluntary reporting that may cause your benefits to go down in the next quarter include:

- Gain or increase of income;
- Someone with no income moves out of your home;
- Someone in your home who had no income dies;
- Someone with income moves into your home;
- Shelter cost decrease.

You **MAY** report changes between quarterly reports either by:

- Mail, telephone or in person at the county food stamp office or by turning in a Mid-Quarter Status Report or QR 3.

OTHER CHANGES

There are other circumstances that will require the county to decrease or discontinue your benefits during the quarter in which they happen. Here are the examples:

- A household member is sanctioned;
- Someone in your household receives benefits in another household;
- A California Food Assistance Program status changes.
- An Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD); food stamp recipient and the number of hours they work or are in training drop to less than 20 hours a week or 80 hours in a month.

CHANGE REPORTING

If you are in a change reporting household, you will not have to follow Quarterly Reporting rules. Instead, you **MUST** report the following changes within ten days:

- If your household has a change in the source of monthly earned income, or your household's monthly earned income starts, stops, or changes by more than \$100.00.
- If your household has a change in the source of monthly unearned income, or your household's monthly unearned income starts, stops, or changes by more than \$50.00.
- Anyone's source of income changes.
- You move in with someone else or anyone moves into or out of your home, including newborns, other children, spouses, other relatives or non-relatives.
- Anyone moves to another address, plans to move or gets a new mailing address.
- Your household's total cash, stocks, bonds or other money is more than \$2000 (or \$3000 if someone in our household is age 60 or over or disabled).
- If there is a change in the amount of any court ordered child support paid by a member of the household for a child not living in the home.

- If you are an Able Bodied Adult Without Dependents and your work hours drop below 20 hours a week or 80 hours a month.
- Any member of your household who is avoiding or running from the law to avoid felony prosecution, custody or confinement after conviction, or is in violation of probation or parole.
- Any household member has been convicted after August 22, 1996 of a drug-related felony for manufacturing, sale, or distribution of a controlled substance, or any activity in connection with these unlawful acts, or harvesting, cultivating or processing marijuana, or involving a minor in the above activities, cannot receive food stamp benefits.

You **MAY** report when:

- Anyone's physical or mental illness begins or ends.
- Anyone's citizenship, immigration status changes or anyone gets a letter, form or new card from the USCIS (formerly INS).
- You have changes in your dependent care costs.
- Any member who is disabled or age 60 or older has changes in or new medical expenses. If verified, your allotment can be refigured.
- Any member begins to pay court-ordered child support for a child not living in the home.

You may report changes either:

- By mail, telephone, or in person at the County Food Stamp Office; or
- By turning in a DFA 377.5 Food Stamp Household Change Report form.

Transitional Food Stamp Benefits

If your household begins receiving transitional food stamp benefits, you do not have to report while receiving these benefits.

If you are receiving transitional food stamp benefits, you may reapply to see if you can get more benefits. If you reapply and are approved for regular food stamp benefits, then all normal reporting rules will apply.